

CHILDREN DRIVEN TO **DEATH** BY THE PKK



*Captives of evil plots,
these children see the world through
the cross hairs...*

“This study is a compilation of reports and cases that reached the ears of a group of independent journalists/researchers and NGO workers stationed in the region.

With sincere hopes that this tragedy that stands in stark contrast to all Western values stirs due reaction in Europe...”

(We are not at liberty to expose the names of those who still travel to Iraq and Syria and some Kurdish-speaking areas in Turkey and of those who contributed to this study out of fear that PKK/Kurdistan Workers’ Party might do them harm.)

For your contributions:

“forpeaceworld2016@gmail.com”

Children's rights is a universal notion embracing right to education, right to health, right to live, right to shelter and right to protection from physical, psychological and sexual exploitation. All children on earth are entitled at birth to these rights either legally or morally.

Both the international law and the international conventions define the use of child fighters as "a crime against humanity."



Operating in some of the Kurdish-speaking regions in Turkey Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has been forcing young girls and boys to be a part of its struggle without the consent of their families.

A Kurdish MP of the Turkish Parliament gives statistical data on the composition of the PKK explaining that 40% of its combat force were made up of children younger than 18 years while 10% was composed of children below the age of 15.

Children who are snatched off or kidnapped from especially poor families by the PKK and taken to the mountains of Iraq are forced to choose between life and death.



An NGO worker interviewed in Diyarbakir says the majority of the children taken to the PKK camps in Qandil, Iraq either commit suicide or are killed by diseases, in their attempt to escape or during air strikes while their deaths are kept from their families.

INTERNATIONAL LAW



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and similar international laws classify the military use of children as “a crime against humanity.”

This has been explicitly described in the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of the Child: “military use of children is the violation of a fundamental human right and no heads of states or organizations who recruit child soldiers are immune from prosecution before the international criminal court.”



UN, UNICEF, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and many NGOs have drawn attention in their reports to the child fighters within PKK, pointing out to the possible problems they would constitute for the societies.

In their report submitted at the AMMAN Conference, “the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers” declared that PKK had been systematically training children for military purposes and kept 3000 child recruits with ages ranging between 8 and 12 while 10% of them were girls. The same facts were emphasized “in the UN Global Report on Child Soldiers.”



The 2013 Annual Country Report on Human Rights Practices compiled by the Bureau of Democracy and Human Rights, US Department of State indicated under the chapter “Child Soldiers” that PKK regularly recruited child soldiers and the number of child soldiers within PKK was still unknown.

June 2014 Report of the UNICEF, “the UN agency for the protection of the children,” expressed deep concern about news reports of children in the ranks of PKK which is internationally recognized as a terrorist organization. Military use of children by states and non-state actors is a crime.”



Syrian Democratic Union Party (PYD) acting in alliance with PKK and using PKK symbols in Rojava, Syria and, its armed apparatus YPG also recruit child fighters coming from Lebanon, Makhmur, Iraq and Kurdish regions of Syria.

Human Rights Watch 2014 Report stated that YPG recruited children.



The report of the Secretary-General (# A/69/926/-S/2015/409) on “Children and Armed Conflicts” to the United Nations Security Council in June 2015 noted that “YPG/YPJ recruited boys and girls younger than 15 years, arming and using them in combats.”

Also the Human Rights Watch (HRW) declaration in writing made in July 2015 underscored “YPG’s failure to fulfill its commitments made to the NGO called Geneva Call on decommissioning child soldiers” warning that “children under age 18 were documented to have taken place both within YPG and YPJ (KONGRA-GEL/PKK women’s wing) and as such, YPG violated the international law.”

PARENTS AND CHILDREN



Families striving to keep their children away from the clutches of PKK relocate to the western provinces of Turkey or even move to Europe. By attacking state schools in the Kurdish regions that the children of poor families attend to, PKK, the parents warn, attempts to deprive children of education and seeks to increase the number of its





The placards read: "Children should be holding pens, not guns!!!" "Give us back our children who were taken away on April 23rd." "15-year-olds do not have political ideologies!!!"

2953 families residing in some of the Kurdish-speaking regions of Turkey filed missing child reports to the authorities in the last two years crying out that their children had been abducted by PKK, according to national official records.



The official who provided this figure explained that the actual number is even higher given that there are several other families who, due the PKK pressure, were unable to report their children missing.

Independent researchers/journalists and non-governmental organizations have been working in the field in Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon within the scope of accelerated immigration movements prompted by the ongoing DAESH terror in the region and the humanitarian needs that emerged as a result. Majority of the cases they have encountered shed light on the tragedies the families of the abducted children had to face:



- E.T., a mother living in Hakkari, province east of Turkey, told his epileptic son was abducted by the PKK two years ago and only once had she heard of him since the day he was taken away. She learnt that he was in a PKK camp in Iraq. She believed PKK caused serious harm to the Kurds.



- G.C., a mother from the southeastern province of Batman told she kissed his 13-year-old son goodbye and sent him to school to never see or hug him again. She has cancer and she wants to have her son back before she died.
- N.C, a mother from the eastern province of Diyarbakir lamented for her 17- year-old son who was a student at an Anatolian High School (a public high school that admits students according to high national-wide standardized tests). He was lured by PKK into being a recruit. The family wept for days hugging his clothes left behind. She thinks PKK was using the children to operate its filthy political machinery and do not care whether the children lived or died.
- K.R. and S.S., two mothers from Diyarbakir, mourn for their 15-year-old children who were kidnapped by the PKK while at picnic. The mothers vow to continue their struggle to take their children back.



- O.I, a father who works as a janitor in Beirut, explained that he and his family are originally from the Turkish town of Savur in the southeastern province of Mardin and he had sent his 13-year-old son to Diyarbakir to spend the summer holiday with his relatives 3 years ago. His son Z.I was abducted by the PKK on his third day in Diyarbakir and taken to a camp in Qandil. The father knows that his son is still at the same camp. His son was a successful student who speaks Arabic, French and English. O.I has spent 10.000 USD so far to rescue his son to no avail. He is worried about his son's life. The father says this is not their war to fight.



- The 15-year-old S.A. had traveled from Germany to the eastern province of Van, Turkey for summer holidays and she was tricked into going to Iraq by the PKK. Her father said his daughter was abducted by the PKK. He went to Suleimaniyah, Iraq to rescue his daughter and met with the members of the TALABANI family to that end without any success. A person named Baran who contacted him on behalf of PKK informed him that his daughter was dead and asked him to leave Iraq. In great sorrow, the father tearfully described the great pain the whole family suffered.
- R.K., a father from the eastern province of Bitlis, narrated how her mentally disabled daughter was taken away to be never heard of again. He said PKK has no right to torture families in this way.



NGO officials who work to provide assistance to Syrian refugees in Turkey got into contact with some of the teenagers who managed to escape from PKK after having been kidnapped, deceived or forced to stay within. Below are the brief accounts by some of these children:

- B. (15) said s/he was 13 when s/he joined the PKK. S/He managed to escape two years later and surrendered to security forces. PKK forced children to undergo training for 6-month periods. The youth battalions, including young children who had been kidnapped (around 60-70 children), also underwent training.



- B (14): S/He had been tricked into thinking that s/he could become a hero, put an end to her/his family's poverty and make great contributions for the Kurdish people and thus, s/he was taken to the mountains. Children who wanted to go back to their families were punished. Such children were kept apart to prevent any sort of interaction or collective outcry. PKK seeks to distill fear among children disseminating reports that those who surrendered were killed.



- M. (15): S/He was snatched away by 4 PKK members who came to her/his village approximately 3 years ago. S/He stayed at the camps for almost a year after having been abducted. S/He had lived in a cave together with a group of 25 boys and girls of same age. They had no food problems. S/He was sent to a village after s/he developed a health condition. S/He still had a problem with her/his lungs. One of the friends s/he stayed together, Rabia, attempted to escape only to be found later at her hideout and killed by a bullet to her head. Later on they found out that Rabia was pregnant.



- P (14): S/He met with PKK when s/he was a student at the elementary school. S/He was told that s/he needed to go the mountains and thus, sent to a PKK camp without the knowledge of her/his family when s/he was at 5th grade. They received weapons training at the PKK camps. They were threatened to be killed unless they learnt the military ways of PKK. A friend of hers/his was shot dead because he refused to do what he was told. One night her/his camp commander called her/him out and raped her/him. Her/His only thought and plan was to escape and one night, s/he took all risks and managed to escape.



- Z. (14): There were so many children between the ages of 9 and 14 in the mountains. They received weapons training after the basic training. Those who were older than 15 were no more called children as they were considered adults. Children were abused and raped in the mountains and none of that constituted any problem as long as such incidents remained unknown. Only children who got pregnant were viewed as problems.



An Iraq-based NGO worker who contributed to this report alarmed everyone to the ongoing horrors saying that what he had witnessed at the settlement areas in Iraq close to Turkish border put him in unspeakable shame as a human being. He heard horrifying stories which were impossible to prove. What PKK has done to these children was no different from what DAESH did to Yazidi and Christian children in Xinjar or Mosul. He expressed deep concern for these children who had been intellectually and physically abused by both DAESH and PKK and the danger they posed, he worried, was a threat to all innocent children. The NGO worker thought the only solution was for the countries to fight against such groups.

**Official Turkish statistics reveal the following
terrifying facts:**

**The median age of children
driven to death by the PKK is 14
while their average life span is
only 8 years...**

**In DAESH-controlled Xinjar,
Mosul and Raqqa, the median
age of little girls taken as
prisoners is 9...**

Images in this report have been taken from the NGOs that are still working in Iraq and from social media.